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# MAXIE'S CHALLENGE

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I was lucky enough to go visit my best friend for a couple of weeks in June. Better than that, my best friend lives in the Netherlands, so I got an awesome vacation at the same time. This is the first time I've been to see Bryan and his son since I started the Maxie Challenge, and I have to say I looked at things through different eyes this time around. First of all, Bryan's family eats a lot of carbohydrates. Not that carbs are the enemy, but I had been laying off of them a bit, especially white carbs like rice and bread. On this trip, I found myself eating like the natives—lots of carbs. But—and here's the main thing—I didn't gain any weight. As a matter of fact, there are very few heavy people in Europe. And I know why: I walked my legs off! We never took a car. We walked everywhere, whether to eat, or shop, or to the train when we were taking a longer trip. And when we got off the train, we walked from there to our destination. So the whole trip pointed out to me how important it is to be active. Of course, the temperatures made it easy to walk—the highs were in the 70s, and the lows in the upper 50s. Talk about nice weather.

Then I came home. And I don't need to tell you it's been hotter than a fry skillet every day. And guess what? I got lazy. I quit walking



*Maxie's vacation took him to the Netherlands, where he experienced how most Europeans stay fit: They walk everywhere! Photo by Bryan Ondaan.*

after work. And even though I was back to my usual healthy fare, I wasn't feeling as good as I had. I know I said that I wasn't going to join a gym, but two things have pushed me in that direction. One is the heat. I think I'd like to work out on a treadmill while it's so hot. The other is that although I have been keeping trimmer by walking, I want to take a step further and reshape my body a little bit. That's going to take weights. I'm looking for a gym now that is close to my

house—or at least on the way home from work—and cheap.

Finally, it was nearly a year ago that I started the Maxie Challenge. Next month, I'll reveal the before-and-after pictures, and list the ten things that I'm going to take with me for the rest of my healthy life. I can honestly say it's a year that has changed my life for the better, and without too much effort. Not only do I feel better, but I look better, too. But you'll see that next issue.